



For the Patient: Lenalidomide
Other names: REVLIMID®

BC Cancer Agency

- **Lenalidomide** (len a lid' oh mide) is a drug that is used to treat several types of cancer. It is a capsule that you take by mouth.
- Tell your doctor if you have ever had an unusual or **allergic reaction** to lenalidomide or thalidomide (THALOMID®) before taking lenalidomide.
- Before receiving lenalidomide you will be **registered** with the RevAid® Program, a distribution control program run by the manufacturer of lenalidomide.
- A **blood test** may be taken before each treatment. The dose and timing of your chemotherapy may be changed based on the test results and/or other side effects.
- If you are a woman and are able to bear children, a blood test to determine whether you are **pregnant** will be taken twice before starting lenalidomide treatment, weekly for the first 4 weeks of treatment, and then repeated every four weeks.
- Lenalidomide may harm the baby if used during pregnancy. Severe birth defects or death to the unborn baby may occur. **Two** forms of reliable **birth control must** be used at the same time during treatment and for 4 weeks after your last dose of lenalidomide. Tell your doctor right away if you become pregnant. Do not breast feed during treatment.
- **Men** who are taking lenalidomide must use a **condom** every time they have sex with a female partner who is able to bear children. A condom should be used during treatment and for four weeks after the last dose of lenalidomide. This is because it is not known if the drug is present in semen. Tell your doctor right away if your partner becomes pregnant.
- **Do not donate blood or semen** while you are taking lenalidomide and for 4 weeks after your last dose of lenalidomide.
- It is important to **take** lenalidomide exactly as directed by your doctor. Make sure you understand the directions. You may be given capsules of more than one strength to make the right dose.
- You may **take** lenalidomide with food or on an empty stomach.

- If you **miss a dose** of lenalidomide, take it as soon as you can if it is within 12 hours of the missed dose. If it is more than 12 hours since your missed dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your usual dosing times.
- If you **vomit** the dose of lenalidomide within 30 minutes of taking it, repeat the dose. Let your doctor know as a medication to prevent nausea may be required for future doses.
- Other drugs such as digoxin (LANOXIN®) may **interact** with lenalidomide. Tell your doctor if you are taking this or any other drugs as you may need extra blood tests or your dose may need to be changed. Check with your doctor or pharmacist before you start or stop taking any other drugs.
- The **drinking of alcohol** (in small amounts) does not appear to affect the safety or usefulness of lenalidomide.
- **Store** lenalidomide capsules out of the reach of children, at room temperature, away from heat, light, and moisture.
- **Tell** doctors, dentists, and other health professionals that you are being treated with lenalidomide before you receive any treatment from them.

Changes in blood counts

Lenalidomide may cause temporary changes in your blood counts. Your doctor will be following these changes carefully by performing blood tests. Adjustment of your treatment may be needed in certain circumstances.

BLOOD COUNTS	MANAGEMENT
<p>Normal white blood cells protect your body by fighting bacteria (germs) that cause infection. When they are low, you are at greater risk of having an infection.</p>	<p>To help prevent infection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wash your hands often and always after using the bathroom. • Avoid crowds and people who are sick. • Call your doctor immediately at the first sign of an infection such as fever (over 100°F or 38°C by an oral thermometer), chills, cough, or burning when you pass urine.

BLOOD COUNTS	MANAGEMENT
<p>Normal platelets help your blood to clot normally after an injury (e.g., cut). When the platelet count is low, you may be more likely to bruise or bleed.</p>	<p>To help prevent bleeding problems:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try not to bruise, cut, or burn yourself. • Clean your nose by blowing gently. Do not pick your nose. • Avoid constipation. • Brush your teeth gently with a soft toothbrush as your gums may bleed more easily. <p>Some medications such as ASA (e.g., ASPIRIN®) or ibuprofen (e.g., ADVIL®) may increase your risk of bleeding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not stop taking any medication that has been prescribed by your doctor (e.g., ASA for your heart). • For minor pain, try acetaminophen (e.g., TYLENOL®) first, but occasional use of ibuprofen may be acceptable.

Side effects are listed in the following table in the order in which they may occur. Tips to help manage the side effects are included.

SIDE EFFECTS	MANAGEMENT
<p>Nausea and vomiting may occur with lenalidomide.</p>	<p>Take only anti-nausea medication prescribed or approved by your oncologist. It is easier to prevent nausea than treat it once it has occurred, so follow directions closely.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drink plenty of fluids. • Eat and drink often in small amounts. • Try the ideas in <i>Food Choices to Help Control Nausea</i>.*
<p>Skin rash and/or itching may sometimes occur.</p>	<p>If itching is very irritating, call your doctor. Otherwise, be sure to mention it at your next visit.</p>
<p>Fever and chills may sometimes occur.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you have fever (over 100°F or 38°C by an oral thermometer) plus another sign of infection, call your doctor immediately. Other signs of infection include chills, cough, or burning when you pass urine.

SIDE EFFECTS	MANAGEMENT
Minor bleeding, such as nosebleeds , may sometimes occur.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sit up straight and tip your head slightly forward. Tilting your head back may cause blood to run down your throat. • Pinch your nostrils shut between your thumb and forefinger or apply firm pressure against the bleeding nostril for 10 full minutes. • After 10 minutes, check to see if your nose is still bleeding. If it is, hold it for 10 more minutes. • Stay quiet for a few hours and do not blow your nose for at least 12 hours after the bleeding has stopped. • Get emergency help if a nosebleed lasts longer than 20 minutes.
Indigestion or heartburn with or without spasms of the intestines may sometimes occur.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid fatty, fried, or spicy foods. • Talk to your doctor about taking antacids.
Constipation may sometimes occur.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercise if you can. • Drink plenty of fluids. • Try ideas in <i>Suggestions for Dealing with Constipation</i>.*
Diarrhea may commonly occur.	<p>If diarrhea is a problem:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drink plenty of fluids. • Eat and drink often in small amounts. • Avoid high fibre foods as outlined in <i>Food Ideas to Help with Diarrhea During Chemotherapy</i>.* • Note: If lactose in milk usually gives you diarrhea, the lactose in the capsule may be causing your diarrhea. Take LACTAID® tablets just before your lenalidomide dose.
Headache may sometimes occur.	Take acetaminophen (e.g., TYLENOL®) every 4-6 hours if needed, to a maximum of 4 g (4000 mg) per day.
Dizziness may sometimes occur.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take care not to fall, especially after getting up quickly.

SIDE EFFECTS	MANAGEMENT
Muscle cramps/spasm/pain or joint pain may sometimes occur.	You may take acetaminophen (e.g., TYLENOL®) every 4-6 hours to a maximum of 4 g (4000 mg) per day or ibuprofen (e.g., ADVIL®) for mild to moderate pain. Tell your doctor if the pain, cramps or spasms interfere with your activity.
Swelling of hands, feet, or lower legs may sometimes occur if your body retains extra fluid.	If swelling is a problem: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elevate your feet when sitting. • Avoid tight clothing.
You may sometimes have trouble sleeping .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk to your doctor if you continue to have trouble sleeping. • This will return to normal when you stop taking lenalidomide.
Loss of appetite may sometimes occur.	Try the ideas in <i>Food Ideas to Help with Decreased Appetite</i> .*
Tiredness and lack of energy may sometimes occur.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your doctor may do a blood test to make sure your thyroid gland is working properly. • Do not drive a car or operate machinery if you are feeling tired. • Try the ideas in <i>Your Bank to Energy Savings: How People with Cancer Can Handle Fatigue</i>.*
Hair loss is rare with lenalidomide. If you lose hair, it will grow back once you stop treatment with lenalidomide. Colour and texture may change.	If hair loss is a problem, refer to <i>For the Patient: Hair loss due to chemotherapy</i> .*
Blood clots may rarely occur. This is more likely to happen if you have had blood clots before. Signs to watch for include tenderness or hardness over a vein, calf tenderness, swelling – especially in one leg or arm but not the other, sudden onset of cough, chest pain, or shortness of breath.	To help prevent blood clots: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep active. • Drink plenty of fluids. • Avoid tight clothing. • Do not sit with your legs crossed at the knees.

*Please ask your chemotherapy nurse or pharmacist for a copy.

STOP TAKING LENALIDOMIDE AND SEE YOUR DOCTOR OR GET EMERGENCY HELP IMMEDIATELY IF YOU HAVE:

- Signs of an **infection** such as fever (over 100°F or 38°C by an oral thermometer), shaking chills; severe sore throat, productive cough (coughing up thick or green

sputum); cloudy or foul smelling urine; painful, tender, or swollen red skin wounds or sores.

- Signs of **bleeding problems** such as black, tarry stools; blood in urine; pinpoint red spots on skin; extensive bruising.
- Signs of a **blood clot** such as tenderness or hardness over a vein, swelling and tenderness – especially in one leg or arm but not the other, sudden onset of cough, chest pain, or shortness of breath.
- Signs of an **allergic reaction** (rare) soon after a treatment including dizziness, fast heart beat, face swelling, or breathing problems.
- Signs of **heart problems** such as fast or uneven heartbeat, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, swelling of feet or lower legs, or chest pain.
- **Pain** in your mouth or jaw.

SEE YOUR DOCTOR AS SOON AS POSSIBLE (DURING OFFICE HOURS) IF YOU HAVE:

- Signs of **anemia** such as unusual tiredness or weakness.
- Signs of **liver problems** such as yellow eyes or skin, white or clay-coloured stools.
- Signs of **kidney problems** such as lower back or side pain, swelling of feet or lower legs, difficulty urinating, or pain when urinating.
- **Dizziness.**
- **Tingling or change in feeling** in your fingers or toes.
- **ringing** in your ears.
- **Changes in eyesight.**

CHECK WITH YOUR DOCTOR IF ANY OF THE FOLLOWING CONTINUE OR BOTHER YOU:

- Uncontrolled nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea.
- Headache or pain not controlled with acetaminophen (e.g., TYLENOL®).
- Easy bruising or minor bleeding.
- Difficulty sleeping.
- Change in weight.
- Skin rash or itching.
- Persistent or painful constipation or heartburn.
- Excessive or persistent tiredness.
- Unusual mood changes.
- Constipation.

REPORT ADDITIONAL PROBLEMS TO YOUR DOCTOR
